Enviado por Klemens

TL 3348

"O Tempo": 3 September 1987

FEDERIN RECEBIDO 16/10/87

Von der Indon. Botschaft

TIMOR AND THE HONOR OF THE NATION

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The unexpected visit to Timor made possible by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Mr. Mochtar, one of the most distinguished Asian diplomats of the moment, gives us an opportunity to correct our recent history. The most thorough reports as to what went on in that ancient Indonesian territory, under Portuguese administration for 400 years, were made at the time of the Portuguese revolution by the journalist Adelino Gomes.

Later, a team from RTP, led by Rui de Araujo, was there, and a delegation from CCDDSS, led by engineer Anacoreta Correia, also visited Timor last year. We must also consider a report delivered by the last governor, Mr. Lemos Pires, to the then president, General Ramalho Eanes. The circumstances under which we left Dili, former Portuguese Timor's capital, leave much to be told. Possibly, the CCDDSS mission had the best insight as to what was going on, as they kept some distance from what was happening. Adelino Gomes injected his emotions into his work, and it is known that he sympathized with the Fretilin. Adelino Gomes always conveyed the points of view and aspirations of the Fretilin, belonging at that time to the great currents of the Left which were very prevalent throughout the country. It is clear that Adelino Gomes embraced the Fretilin's objectives, and so we frequently concluded that the more than 100,000 deaths that took place in Timor were due to the Indonesian invasion.

Nothing can be further from the truth. When the Indonesian troops entered the territory on December 7, 1975, thousands of Timor citizens had already perished in the ferocious conflict. The followers of the Fretilin, UDT, and Apodeti were killing each other. We have to respect history and say that the Fretilin went out of control. Personal vendettas came up, persecution and summary judgements were common, much in the same manner as happened in Portugal after April 25, 1974,

with the difference that the Portuguese were not killing each other, but rather persecuting each other. In Timor, the same phenomenon took place. However, the Indonesian characteristic of a violent temper inevitably led to the law of terror. Eyewitnesses tell the story: with Portuguese weapons in hand, the Fretilin took over the city, and their militia started the persecution and violence. They requisitioned supplies from the store, and presented "ad hoc" papers promising that they would pay the debts once they became the Government of Timor.

Any militiaman could request a weapon and use it in whatever manner he wanted. An ex-Fretilin militiaman told me that at the time life was good (after the escape of Lemos Pires): there was plenty of wine, women, and weapons. The city and the territory were being ransacked as there was no one in charge. Portugal placed its authority in the hands of armed civilians.

Thus, terrible atrocities began, and the Portuguese military personnel left in a disorderly manner from Timor, giving their weapons to the Fretilin militiamen, who must bear this shame, one of the darkest periods of history. In February 1986, upon request of the provisional government, which was installed with the help of Indonesia, the Indonesian Red Cross carried out investigations in Timor and discovered a large number of Fretilin's victims, who died resisting the Fretilin militia. On the 15th of that month, a team from the Red Cross arrived in Ailieu, where Fretilin had its headquarters, uncovering hundreds of corpses, the majority of them mutilated. The worst corpse deposit was uncovered on the 17th of that month, however, at the small village of same. Based on the testimony of the survivors in the village, it was confirmed that atrocities did take place during the tragic civil war caused by the Fretilin. These facts must be observed in a cold manner, however. In the beginning, Fretilin was not a terrorist

movement. It was started when Colonel Aldeia, then the Governor (whose name was given to a street in Dili), announced the MFA's authorization on May 28, 1974 that political parties be allowed in Timor. At this point, a referendum was promised for March 13, 1975, allowing the following choices for Timor's people: an autonomous federative territory of Portugal (at the time, General Spinola was in power and was the head of the MFA), or independent country (as part or outside of the Portuguese commonwealth), or integration into the Republic of Indonesia.

Four parties were born in the poor and small Portuguese Timor. Among these were the UDT, Timor Democratic Union, constituted by 23 Timor citizens, some of them ex-members of the defunct ANP of Lisbon, with Lopes da Cruz as its president. The party's proposal was to keep ties with Portugal until reaching a level of economic development which would allow it to become independent in the long term. The party was supported by 230 of the 472 "sukus" (claps comprising the population), which enjoyed the support of 50,070 Timorese citizens. The Fretilin East Timor Independent Revolutionary Front was headed by Francisco Xavier do Amaral, an employee of the customs service, and José Ramos Horta, a journalist from the "Voz de Timor", who became the Secretary General of the party. The Fretilin's program sought immediate independence, with radical changes in the social and economic structure of the territory. In October 1975, in its edition of the 17th, the highly regarded "The Far Eastern Economic Review" described the Fretilin as follows: "The party seems to want to be identified as a Third World independence Movement, as many around the world. Six weeks after becoming an important party of intellectuals, the Fretilin acquired an image similar to Frelimo's from Mozambique, proposing a collective existence, with the same flag and anthem." Xavier do Amaral was nominated to be the party's president.

The Apodeti, Popular Democratic Association of Timor, was founded on May 27, 1974 with the original name of Aiti, Association for the Integration of Timor into Indonesia, and was directed by Arnoldo dos Reis Araujo, a 29 year old former teacher, who had been jailed under the old Portuguese regime. The Party's Secretary General was Osorio Soares, who was later killed by the Fretilin during the war. The Apodeti porclaimed the integration of Timor into Indonesia, and several of its members had participated in the 1959 revolt against the Portuguese colonial government in Viguegue. Two other parties appeared, the Kota, with José Martins as head (who had contributed to Tempo several times, like Ramos Horta from the Fretilin), born in Timor and son of an old "Liurai" from Ermera, who went into exile as he opposed the Portuguese colonial regime. The Partido Trabalhista (Worker's Party) was headed by A. Abraao. Both the Kota and Partido Trabalhista joined forces with the UDT after seeing the atrocities and extremism of Fretilin, and demanded, persistently and unanimously, that East Timor be integrated fully into the Republic of Indonesia.

The Fretilin, which bears the responsibility for the Genocide in Timor, after General Lemos Pires's escape and before the arrival of Indonesian troops on December 7, was not originally a terrorist and violent movement, but became so later. It was, however, a radical party, with influences from the Marxist movements of Angola and Mozambique, from whom it reportedly received assistance.

Once the Portuguese were driven out, Fretilin tried to establish itself throughout the territory as the only movement. It even made an agreement with the UDT, breaking it later by not participating in a meeting held in Macau between the Portuguese and the other remaining parties. Fretilin was seeking the impossible, which was namely the full independence of East Timor. In effect, the small territory had no possibility of becoming independent. The future of the people of Timor,

to which we had been linked for over 400 years, depends on the prosperity of Indonesia, to which it now belongs as one of its 27 provinces. The poverty of the territory could easily be seen, if we remember that its per capita income at the time was 40 dollars, less than many fourth world countries.

On May 4, 1974, one month after the revolution, the Governor, Colonel Alves Aldeia, sent an envoy to the Governor of Indonesian Timor, El Tari, asking for urgent loans of fuel and wheat flour, which was the basic food of the people. It is necessary to recognize that Portugal maintained Timor in a state of misery for 450 years. There were no paved roads in Timor, hindering transportation during the rainy season, cutting communications between the interior and Dili, the administrative capital of the territory. There was not a single manufacturing industry in the country and the sole export was the famous Timor coffee, which contributed 80 percent of the territory's income, but the production of which depended on weather conditions which were not always favorable. Copra and rubber were the other export products. Corn was another staple of the Timor diet, but, like rice. it had to be imported from Indonesian Timor to cover the population's needs. The following letter, sent by the Portuguese Ambassador to the United Nations Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim, on December 27, 1974, helps to understand what the subsistence level of the territory was at the time that the Fretilin wished to impose unilateral independence: "In 1974, the Portuguese Government subsidized the territory, giving it 2 million dollars above expenditures for the armed forces, security, and infra-structure. In 1975, Timor will need assistance in the amount of 5 million dollars for its emergency programs (which is about half) and for its development program. Without this assistance, the territory will become a powder keg, which will cause the destabilization of the area of the world where it is located."

In contrast with these numbers, it is necessary to note that during the 60's, the Portuguese colonial administration gave Timor an annual subsidy of only 2.5 million dollars. That is an example of Salazar's economies. Due to this policy of misery, when time came for the decolonialization promised by the MFA; the illiteracy rate was 93 percent, there was only one school in the territory in Dili, and, according to the Banco Nacional Ultramarino, the per capita income was 40 dollars, as mentioned above. I still saw signs of this disgrace when I landed at the Dili airport two weeks ago. Dili, capital of a territory with 500,000 inhabitants, is a little bit better than any of our tras-os. montes villages in spite of the fact that Indonesia made significant improvements in Timor, its 27th province, over the last ten years.

Jakarta's TV station can be watched in Timor by means of a satellite. There is a powerful local radio station and the territory's development is based on a three point program: the rehabilitation program, from October 1976 to March 1977, which included the construction of schools, hospitals, telecommunications and communications, the consolidation phase, from April 1977 to March 1978, which involved the stabilization of the provincial government, its local political representation and in the parliament in Jakarta, development of education and the provincial economy, and the stabilization phase from April 1978 to March 1982, dedicated to put in practice the short-term economic plan for economic and industrial development (1982-84) and the five-year plan of 1984-89, which also holds for the other 26 provinces of Indonesia.

This view of the facts is the first such reference in the Portuguese press. Adelino Goves did not do it, because he was in Timor in 1975, and was attracted by the Leftist ideological stance of the Fretilin to which he felt he belonged. The report by Lemos Pires cannot be considered either, as it deals with the facts only partially. And

Anacoreta Correia's report was never duly made public, and he could not possibly have had access to the same amount of information which was supplied to me by the Foreign Affairs Minister and other principal officers.

What can we say about the national tragedy that the decolonialization of Timor represented? This series of Tempo reports, which can be considered complete only when Portugal reestablishes diplomatic relations with Indonesia and sets up a small consulate in Timor, includes much more information and historic analysis. The interviews we had with the current Timor Governor, Engineer Mario Carrascalo, who studied in Lisbon and is a legendary figure in our history, even though he is less than 50 years old, and the Foreign Affairs Minister of Indonesia, Dr. Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, who was the Minister of Justice in 1974 (replacing Adam Malik), will be very important. The latter was nominated Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1978, and remains in that position to this day. At the moment, he is the head of the ASEAN Commission on the invasion of Kampuchea and Laos by Vietnam, which makes him an important focal point for Asian and world politics.

In the documents that were supplied to me, a few Portuguese personalities emerge. Above all, we must analyze the behavior of Colonel Lemos Pires very thoroughly, When he left Dili in a hurry he made an agreement with Fretilin to give it weapons. Was he betrayed or was he acting under the pressures exerted on him by his general staff, formed, probably, by Leftists of the MFA? Who were the officers that always kept in touch with the Fretilin, favoring this political party as opposed to others in spite of promises that the referendum process would be run in a democratic manner? How can it be explained that Melo Antunes, who was one of the two signatories of the Declaration of Rome, in which the Indonesian Government declared its intention to respect the self-determination of the people of

Timor, would be the one to cut relations with that country, when he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs? What was Minister Almeida Satos doing in Jakarta, before Lemos Pires's escape and the latter's transfer of command of Timor to Rogerio Labato, brother of the President of Fretilin? What steps did this Minister take (what did he do?), who did he talk to? How can it be explained that he sent a letter to the United nations contradicting his agreement with the Indonesian Government, after leaving Lisbon on August 22 and arriving in Jakarta only on the the 28th? When General Costa Gomes was the President of the Republic, there were no doubts regarding his behavior. That official was working for the communist party, which he later joined. He wished that Fretilin dominate the situation, making the territory independent and close to the USSR, even though it is known that he had sent a telegram to Colonel Lemos Pires, telling him to do whatever he wished about Timor. It seems evident that the MFA and its friends did all they could to put the Fretilin in control of Timor, causing a genocidal war--with more than 100,000 deaths. Objectively, we have to consider the replacement of Colonel Alves Aldeia by Colonel Lemos Pires, an officer whom the MFA trusted, the nomination of two assistants, Majors Mota and Jonatas, who were conducting political education rallies though the "cabinete de dinamizacao", which led the UDT and the people of Timor to seek their expulsion, which finally took place on August 8, when the two officers boarded a plane to Darwin, Australia, and on to Portugal. Majors Jonatas and Mota were political commissars, collaborating actively with the Fretilin, as opposed to the other political entities. The first political assassinations in Timor took place at that time by local militants, especially in the region of Atsabe, the region most favorable of integration with Indonesia. The two majors sought to prevent referends and elections so that the power stayed in the hands of the

Fretilin. We must also add that several students from Lisbon arrived with the purpose of spreading Marxist ideologies. Until now, it has been impossible to know their names, all we know is that they belonged to the communist party of our country.

It is important to add some more facts and analyses: Fretilin was a Third World movement, with Marxist ideologies, but it was not hostile towards Portugal. So it is not correct to treat the group, now reduced to 500 courageous guerrillas lost in the north mountains, as enemies of Portugal. Even today, Portugal can play an important role in their defence, offering to the Indonesian Government to have them sent to Lisbon or to take them to exile in any other country in case they do not want to surrender to the Indonesian authorities in Dili. The Fretilin guerrillas were born in Timor and dreamed of having an independent country and probably a happy people. But reality has shown that the people from Timor can only be happier if the territory is integrated into Indonesia. On the other hand, we cannot accuse the Indonesian Army of having caused bloodshed in Timor. The Indonesian Army did as any liberation army would do, walking into Dili to restore political legality, which had been destroyed by the Fretilin, and to save the people of Timor from hunger and death. Witnesses told me that they ate rats and cobras when they were in the mountains and on December 7 integrated with the crushed Fretilin forces, which was on the verge of surrendering due to the lack of food and weapons. Thousands of Timorese arrived in Dili later, looking like human skeletons.

Now I would like to describe a little about Portugal's presence before and after April 25, 1974. We cannot close our eyes to what must be looked at and history cannot be made of illusions. Each fact of today is an example for

tomorrow's history. It is not worthy to punish the persons responsible for it. Let us leave them alone and take into consideration that their actions were due to ideological deviations which were leading the Portuguese people to a very dangerous adventure difficult to turn back from. We must reestablish diplomatic relations with Indonesia, so that the Timorese feel, for some centuries more, what good there was in their former colonial bonds. Those who sought refuge here in Portugal, seeking the peace and work they could not find in Timor, coming here on an illusion, must be able to return to Timor or Indonesia whenever they want. O Tempo will continue to publish stories about the history of Timor, so that Portugal's actions become clearer with regard to reestablishing the fraternal relations we had with Indonesia for more than 450 years. My trip from Bangkok to Jakarta on Minister Kusumaatmadja's plane is a diplomatic sign that the Government must recognize. Indonesia wants to reestablish diplomatic ties with Portugal, and does not want to withdraw our historic presence from the romantic land off the coast of far away Australia.

Nobody has touched the property of Portuguese citizens in Timor; it is intact, waiting to be claimed from the Indonesian Government by its owners. The Indonesian Government preserves the Portuguese culture and the Catholic Church. Before my arrival, the Minister of Cooperatives was welcomed by a party whose main attraction was a minho folkloric ranch.

To have contact with a people which consented to our presence in their territory for more than 450 years--since 1509--is a question of national honor.